



February 13, 2007

Kevin Martin, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: FCC Docket #97-80

Dear Chairman Martin:

On October 2, 2006, I wrote the Commission and urged them to waive the pending integration ban for cable set-top boxes because it would represent a punitive and unjustified additional cost for consumers – including middle- and low-income rural Americans that rely on affordable cable television service for information and entertainment.

Since then, the Media Bureau has denied Comcast's request for a waiver for its low-cost, limited capability set-top boxes. This decision would result in the imposition of additional costs targeted at households for whom the low-cost set-top box is the most affordable means of accessing digital services. By denying the waiver for Comcast's low-cost devices, estimates suggest that the cost of these devices will nearly double—a fee that will ultimately be born by the consumer and one that can most accurately be described as a "tax" on Americans.

For many rural Americans, the approaching digital transition from analog television will be a costly hurdle, one that will only be made more cumbersome by the additional costs for navigation devices that carry premium digital content.

We hope that the full Federal Communications Commission will take up this important matter on behalf of millions of rural Americans for whom the pending ban will mean yet another price hike.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Niel Ritchie", is written over a horizontal line.

Niel Ritchie, Executive Director  
League of Rural Voters

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### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Niel Ritchie, hereby certify that, on February 14, 2007, copies of the attached Comments of the League of Rural Voters were served via regular mail, on the following:

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Mr. Michael V. Pulli Pace Micro Technology Americas 3701 FAU Boulevard Suite 200 Boca Raton, FL 33431	Steve B. Sharkey Director, Spectrum and Standards Strategy Motorola, Inc. 1350 I Street, N.W. Suite 400 Washington, D.C. 20005-3305
Mr. Adam Petruszka Director, Strategic Initiatives Hewlett-Packard Company 20555 State Highway 249 MS-140302 Houston, TX 77070	Mr. Jeffrey T. Lawrence Director, Content Policy and Architecture Intel Corporation JF3-147 2111 N.E. 25 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Hillsboro, OR 97124-5961
Mr. Michael D. Petricone, Esq. Vice President, Technology Policy Consumer Electronics Association 2500 Wilson Boulevard Arlington, VA 22201	Mr. Neal M. Goldberg General Counsel National Cable & Telecommunications Association 1724 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

<p>Mr. Gerard J. Waldron Covington &amp; Burling 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20004-2401 <i>Counsel for Microsoft Corporation</i></p>	<p>Mr. Craig K. Tanner Vice President, Cable Business Development Sharp Laboratories of America 8605 Westwood Center Dr., Suite 206 Vienna, VA 22182</p>
<p>Mr. Jeffrey A. Campbell Director, Technology &amp; Comm. Policy Cisco Systems, Inc. 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20004</p>	<p>Ms. Marlene Dortch Secretary Federal Communications Commission 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20554</p>
<p>Mr. Brendan Murray Media Bureau Room 4-A802 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20554</p>	<p>Ms. Jean L. Kiddoo Bingham McCutchen LLP 3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20007 <i>Counsel for RCN</i></p>
<p>Mr. Adam Goldberg Vice President, Government Affairs Pioneer North America, Inc. 8000 Towers Crescent Drive, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor Vienna, VA 22182</p>	<p>Mr. Jeffrey Ross President, Armstrong Utilities, Inc. One Armstrong Place Butler, PA 16001</p>
<p>Mr. John Godfrey Vice President, Government Affairs Samsung Information Systems America, Inc. 1200 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., #550 Washington, D.C. 20036</p>	<p>James L. Casserly Jonathan Friedman Willkie Farr &amp; Gallagher LLP 1875 K Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006 <i>Attorneys for Comcast Corporation</i></p>
<p>Ms. Lillian Rodriguez Lopez President Hispanic Federation 55 Exchange Place, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY 10005</p>	<p>Mr. Jason Wright President Institute for Liberty 4094 Majestic Lane, #278 Fairfax, VA 22033</p>

<p>Mr. Grover Norquist President Americans for Tax Reform 1920 L Street NW, Suite 200 Washington, DC 20036</p>	<p>Mr. Geoffrey Segal Director of Government Reform Reason Foundation 3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 400 Los Angeles, CA 90034</p>
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<p>Mr. Harry C. Alford President &amp; CEO National Black Chamber of Commerce 1350 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 405 Washington, DC 20036</p>	<p>Mr. Manuel Mirabal Founder &amp; Co-Chair Hispanic Technology &amp; Telecommunications Partnership 1901 L Street, N.W., Suite 802 Washington, DC 20036</p>
<p>Mr. Matthew Blank Chairman &amp; CEO Showtime Networks, Inc. 1633 Broadway New York, NY 10019</p>	<p>Mr. Philip Kent Chairman &amp; CEO Turner Broadcasting Systems, Inc. One CNN Center Atlanta, GA 30303</p>
<p>Ms. Debra Lee President &amp; CEO BET Holdings, Inc. 1235 W Street, NE Washington, DC 20018</p>	<p>Ms. Judy McGrath Chairman &amp; CEO MTV Networks 1515 Broadway New York, NY 10036</p>
<p>Ms. Abbe Raven President &amp; CEO A&amp;E Networks 235 E. 45th Street New York, NY 10017</p>	<p>Mr. David Zaslav President NBC Universal Cable 100 Universal City Plaza Universal City, CA 91608</p>

<p>Mr. Michael L. Barrera President &amp; CEO Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 2175 K Street, N.W., Suite 100 Washington, D.C. 20037</p>	<p>Mr. Jimmie V. Reyna President Hispanic National Bar Association 815 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500 Washington, D.C. 20006</p>
<p>Mr. Alex Curtis Policy Director Public Knowledge 1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 650 Washington, D.C. 20009</p>	<p>The Honorable Joe Barton House Energy and Commerce Committee Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515</p>
<p>The Honorable Fred Upton House Energy and Commerce Committee Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515</p>	<p>The Honorable Ted Stevens Senate Commerce Committee Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510</p>
<p>Mr. George Bodenheimer Co-Chairman, Disney Media Networks President, ESPN, Inc. and ABC Sports ESPN Plaza Bristol, CN 06010</p>	<p>Mr. Decker Anstrom President and Chief Operating Officer Landmark Communications, Inc. 150 W. Brambleton Avenue Norfolk, Virginia 23510-2075</p>
<p>Mr. John Hendricks Founder &amp; Chairman Discovery Communications, Inc. 7700 Wisconsin Avenue Bethesda, MD 20814</p>	<p>Mr. Geraldine Laybourne Chairman &amp; CEO Oxygen Media, Inc. 75 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue New York, NY 10011</p>

/s/ Niel Ritchie  
Niel Ritchie